

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

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VOL. I.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xxiii. 34.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Presbyterianism versus Presbyterianism.

As Doctor Ely has seen fit to notice this pamphlet in his *Theological Review*, Vol. II. No. IV. page 470, it is probable he may expect (though it is rather doubtful whether he ought to expect) something in reply. If he had proved, or had even attempted to prove, any thing erroneous in Mr. Kneeland, the author of the pamphlet in question, we should have answered him with cheerfulness, and with all due respect: but when a man so far forgets the main subject of controversy, as to descend to witty *sarcasms*, scurrilous *invectives*, or implied charges of *guilt*, without pointing out wherein such charges are just, he deserves no other reply, in our humble opinion, than just to show our decided disapprobation of such a style of writing. And that such is too much the case with the writings in the *Theological Review*, generally, and with this article in particular, we are very sorry to say, is too true.*

After giving the substance of the preface to the second edition, Dr. E. observes, "From the preface to the se-

* In confirmation of the above, we here insert the following extracts from other parts of the *Theological Review*; and also refer the reader to the extract on page 90 of the *Messenger*

Dr. E. says, Vol. II. p. 332,

"It is but justice to Professor Stuart to say, that he has treated his opponent in a very gentlemanly manner. If he has erred in manner, it is in speaking of Mr. Channing as a Christian, and a Christian minister, when his claims to either of these appellations are very equivocal."

Speaking of Dr. Griffin, he says, p. 428, 429,

"He [Dr. G.] tells us that *beasts* and *worms* are governed by motives. Are they not moral agents then? If governed by motives, they are the subjects of a moral government; and we should suppose Dr. G. must hold the doctrine of some di- vines, that every fox, horse, and other animal, has an immortal soul. Hence, since it is admitted that they have not sinned, and therefore cannot justly be sent to hell, we must have heaven full of dogs, monkeys, crocodiles and asses, unless some third place can be found for them, in the life to come."

cond edition, it would seem doubtful, whether it is best to be guided by the proverb, *Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit*; or another, equally useful, under many circumstances, *Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.*" It seems therefore that the doctor thought, if he answered at all, he should be answering a *fool*, in some way or other, and the only *doubt* was respecting the mode of attack: and after a careful perusal of the article in question, we are unable to determine which of the two proverbs the doctor meant to be "guided by!"

After implying that Mr. K. is a *fool*, as above quoted, the doctor says, "We have come to a conclusion, that Mr. K. is *no fool*, unless it be in the scriptural acceptation of the word, which is there used to denote an unrenowned sinner." Not attempting, however, to decide this point exactly, he comes to something which, perhaps, in his own opinion, is more apparent; viz. "His mental talents are certainly respectable, and his pamphlet is a specimen of ingenious error." So while the doctor would seem to flatter Mr. K. with the one hand, it is only to be more sure of his aim in throwing the javelin of reproach with the other! Of what use are talents and ingenuity, when they are only exercised in propagating error? If the doctor had pointed out an error, and then corrected it by sound argument and scripture testimony, we should have received it kindly: but such barefaced and disingenuous assertions, to the prejudice of any man, either living or dead, without any thing to support them but mere *ipse dixit*, we do not hesitate to say, are unworthy the gentleman and the christian.

The comparison of Mr. K. with Dr. Griffin, we shall pass over without notice, it being a matter of our least concern; just remarking, however, that

whatever errors Dr. G. may be in, we see but little probability of his being set right by the *Editor of the Theological Review*.

"But," the doctor asks, "how does he [Mr. K.] prove, that fallen man is not *naturally* destitute of *ability* to keep the commandments of God, perfectly, in this life? How does he evince, that God is not just in punishing those who have freely sinned, even while the moral power of performing holy actions is not *natural* to them?" This, we say, does not belong to Mr. K. to prove. But it belongs to Presbyterians to prove that God DOES demand obedience of man, in his present state, above the *ability* of man, in this state, to obey! that God is just in punishing (not "those who have freely sinned," for this we do not deny, but) *those who have never sinned*, (such as little infants,) or in punishing *us for the sin of Adam!* And until these things are proven, it is sufficient for us to say, (as Mr. K. has said in his pamphlet, and which is quoted by Dr. E., viz.) "Adam's fall, total depravity, original sin, &c. &c. is not Bible language?" neither has the doctor attempted to show that such is the language of scripture, or that these fundamental doctrines of Presbyterianism can be found in the Bible.

After quoting a paragraph from page 15 of the pamphlet, and putting a part of it in *Italics*, the doctor says, "The portion of this sentence which we have printed in *Italics*, is NONSENSE!" but he does not point out wherein it is wanting in *good sense*; which, as a friend, he ought to have done, or else, to have let it pass without censure. This, as we have intimated before, and we are sorry to find it necessary to repeat, is too much the general character of the work before us. It is true, the sense of the sentence alluded to is not so clear as it might have been; but it is suffi-

ciently clear to be understood, and no one can understand it without discovering in it good sense. We shall quote it as quoted by the doctor, and see if our readers can discover the *nonsense*! "In a popular sense, we say, there is full power to effect a certain object; meaning nothing more by that expression than this; viz. *the object will be effected, if all other powers are out of the way, except that which would oppose the power of which we particularly speak*: but in a philosophical sense, there is not full power, so long as the object is not produced: for all that we know of power is by the effect."

If the words *is expected to oppose*, had been inserted in the room of the words *would oppose*, in the above sentence, the sense would have been more plain, or more complete; but as it is, it is a pity that the sagacity of the doctor could not find something in it better than *nonsense*! The weights of a clock are sufficient to keep it in motion *if all other powers are out of the way*; i. e. if nothing oppose them, except the operation of the wheels and the motion of the pendulum, which *will*, or which *are expected to oppose the power of which we particularly speak*, viz. that of the weights; but if the power of these weights should be opposed by any other power, or obstacle, then they may not be sufficient. Thus much for the NONSENSE.

After Mr. K. had stated, as on page 16 of his pamphlet, "But in the sense in which men are said to go astray like sheep, or to return again to the great Shepherd, &c." and had added, "all this is popular language, and is true only in a popular sense: i. e. true, in relation to the subjects immediately connected:" yea, and had also said, "*It is all true in the sense of Scripture, and in every sense in which its truth can be considered of any possible use*:" and after reading all these sentences, as Dr. E. undoubtedly did, we ask, Was it candid, or ingenuous for him to say, as on page 473—4, "But, remember, reader, all this is only *apparently* true, but really *untrue*, according to Mr. K.?" Does Dr. E. believe that when Mr. K. asserts that a proposition is *true*, in a certain sense, he means that it is *untrue*, in the same sense? If so, his insinuation is just, otherwise it is an insinuation which we should expect from no man—except Dr. E.!

If Mr. K. has not shown "that the passages of Scripture which he considers as *popularly* spoken, must be considered in such a light," we say, that Dr. E. has not shown any thing to the contrary, which certainly was his duty to do, or else not object to the construction given by Mr. K. If a wrong construction had been put upon any passage, it ought to have been named, and what was supposed to be its true meaning given; and then the reader would have had an opportunity of judging for himself whose construction was the most consistent, that of Mr. K., or that of Dr. E.

We shall take no notice of the Bible's being under Mr. K.'s right hand "*a mere nose of wax*!" until it is shown that he has so pressed some passage as to turn its truth into falsehood, whereby his readers may be deceived. The Doctor says, "At fatalism, and making God the author of sin, Mr. K. does not shudder." There is nothing said on either of these subjects in the pamphlet, and the assertion ought not to have been made before the facts were shown. It is not believed, however, that Mr. K. differs materially from the Presbyterians generally on either of these subjects. But, says the doctor, "He has nerve for any thing, for he says that Christ, 'in a theocratical sense, disclaims all ability!'" Christ himself says, John v. 30, *I can of mine own self do nothing*: and it is presumed that Mr. K. meant no more than what is contained in those words. "Men then," says the doctor, "only seem to perform the actions which are ascribed to them; while in fact Jehovah performs them all." When the doctor has pointed out one single act or event which has taken place without divine efficiency, i. e. independently of God, he will furnish us with data by which we can account for all things in the same way. Unless, therefore, the doctor means to give up every inch of ground on which he could consistently dispute an *atheist*, let him take care how he acknowledges that any thing can take place independently of God. Let it be understood, however, that God is only the first, and of course, the *holy* and *innocent* cause of that which in a limited sense is sin; but in the sense that God is the cause of any act, in that sense the act is not sin, it being meant unto good. Witness the

history of Joseph and his brethren.

Why the doctor should "regret to say, that Mr. K. is from New England," we are rather at a loss, unless it is because he was from that quarter himself; and if he should find this *unrenewed New England sinner*, in another and better world, his regret perhaps may be increased! Mr. K., however, rejoices in such a hope; neither would the presence of Dr. E. grieve him in the least; and he is willing to acknowledge that his hope in this particular is in consequence of having been "taught by a better man than himself;" even *the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time*.

On page 476, the doctor says, "The consummation of Mr. K.'s system is, that, in a theocratical sense, man has nothing to do; for God will work in all men, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure; while, in a popular sense, man worketh out his own salvation with fear and trembling." He then quotes the following paragraph, from pages 22 and 23, of the pamphlet,

"According to this system, those who are 'called to be saints,' whilst they feel grateful for the favour, do not consider it to be their exclusive privilege; but believe that this divine grace, which hath been thus liberally bestowed on them, will, sooner or later, reach every son and daughter of Adam. The effects are obvious. Instead of sitting, as it were, in judgment against any of their fellow-beings, and dooming them to eternal perdition for not possessing, what none but God could give, i. e. a new heart; they look upon those who are still alienated from the life of God through the ignorance there is in them, with pity and compassion; and believing them to be, in the will and purpose of God, heirs of the same eternal inheritance with themselves, endeavour to give them all needful instruction."

And he should have added the following, which would have completed the paragraph.

"Believing that their own love to God arises from a correct knowledge of his character, rather than from any change of nature which they have experienced, (as no one can be conscious of such a change,) they endeavour to portray the character of God in its true colours."

Now, reader, prepare yourself for a little astonishment at the concluding paragraph of Dr. E., which immediately follows the above quotation. You shall have it in full, without the least interruption; which is as follows:

"He thus arrives at his conclusion, that eventually all men shall be saved. And are there any people of common sense, who receive the Bible as the revelation from God, who can assent to such delusive teaching?"

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Let them take heed, how, and what they hear, from sabbath to sabbath. Let them fear lest they deny the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true God and eternal life; and so experience that everlasting destruction from his presence, which shall come upon the finally ungodly. It is something more than a popular form of speech, that *he who believeth not shall be damned*; that some shall arise, in the judgment, to shame and everlasting contempt; and, that *all the wicked shall be turned into hell*. Let the hearers of Mr. K. remember his predecessor in the same church; and fear, lest he also, having laid violent hands on himself, should tell them, in his dying moments, with despair settled in his soul, that he had preached to them *damning lies*."

On the above paragraph we wish seriously to inquire, If Jesus Christ be definitively the true God, and his God and Father be also *the true God*, is there *only one living and true God*? or are there *two*? We have never denied Jesus Christ to be a *true God*, in the sense that the scriptures style him God; but cordially believe in him as the *Son* and *sent* of God: and also acknowledge him to be the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life*; and believe that the life which is in him is *eternal*.

Again, we ask, what does Dr. E. mean by *the finally ungodly*? Are they such as God could save, but would not? or such as he would save but could not? or such as he neither could nor would save? If they are not one of these three characters, why are they *finally ungodly*? The Bible knows of no such character! That *the wicked shall be turned into hell*; with *all the nations that forget God*, is a solemn truth, we do not deny; but firmly believe: but none of these things militate against our faith and hope in the reconciliation of all things to God; as has been abundantly shown in the *Christian Messenger*.

Lastly, we would solemnly inquire, what concern has Mr. K. with his predecessor? or why is he referred to unless it be to wound the feelings of his friends? Or if Dr. E. could not, in conscience, discharge a duty which he owed Mr. K., without calling to his remembrance the melancholy death of his predecessor, why are the facts so egregiously misrepresented? It is very well known that the much lamented Mr. R. died in the hospital, where he was placed in consequence of insanity, or mental derangement, and that no

one was with him in his *dying moments*! It is equally well known that he told his son, who saw him the last of any one, and others who were with him but the afternoon before his death, that he could believe in nothing else but that which he had always preached, but his mind was broken up, or words to that purport. What he had told others, in fits of delirium during his sickness, or at any other time, we cannot say, neither is it a matter of any consequence, as no confidence can be placed in the declarations, or confessions, of any man, who, unfortunately, has lost his reason. What motive, therefore, Dr. E. could have had in calling up this melancholy subject, we cannot even imagine: but if he thought it would be an honour to himself, or an injury to Mr. K., or to the cause in which he is engaged, he is altogether mistaken. A man of so little consideration, and so destitute of Christian feelings, is truly to be pitied! What if one of the learned and pious clergymen of this, or any other city, should, from sickness, or from any other cause, become mentally deranged; and in this state of mind should die; but previous to his death should tell his physician, or some other person, that the Bible contained nothing but "*damning lies*!" would any serious Christian, while in his senses, set a less value on the Bible in consequence of this circumstance? Surely no! And if this unfortunate church should be so happy as to obtain another minister, what should we think of the man, who, from any motive whatever, should try to dissuade the people from hearing their new minister, because he still maintained the truth of the Bible, notwithstanding what had been said by his predecessor? and the better to effect his purpose, should say to them, "Let the hearers of Mr. — remember his predecessor in the same church; and fear, lest he also—should tell them in his dying moments, with despair settled in his soul, that the Bible contained nothing but DAMNING LIES!" Would not every reasonable person say, that such a man was guilty of something *less excusable* than insanity? Let conscience give the answer. But would this be likely to prevent any one from attending the public worship of God? No! We are happy in saying, it would not. Neither do we believe that what Dr. E. (very unadvisedly as we say) has written against Mr.

K., will prevent any person of sense from hearing him; though we have no doubt but that it was intended for that purpose. But it will have the contrary effect; it will serve to increase his hearers, rather than diminish them. Thus, on the whole, we are willing to acknowledge, that, in our opinion, Dr. E. has done us a favour; but we do not thank him for it, because we do not believe he meant it as such; neither can we approbate the manner in which it is done.

Thus, in faithfulness, we have discharged a duty, which, as we conceived, was due to Dr. Ely: and although we do not expect that this will meet the eye of but very few of those who will read his article against us, yet it was also a duty which we owed to ourselves and the public.

THE HEARERS OF MR. K.

The unity of the Spirit

And why do Christians thus contend,
For items in their creeds?
An enemy and not a friend,
Sows these contentious seeds.

'Twas love to God and love to man,
The dear Redeemer brought;
No metaphysic doctrine can
Compare with what he taught.

Why do we judge each other so?
This judging genders strife;
It is enough our Lord to know,
And feel his heav'nly life.

What if my brother disagrees
With me in certain things;
Yet strives by works of love to please,
And fruit abundant brings?

Shall I disown a brother dear,
For whom my Saviour died?
Can I be filled with gospel fear,
And walk in all this pride?

O may I learn to walk in love,
In charity abound;
Possess those tempers of the dove,
Which rather heal than wound.

B.

Christian Messenger.

Philadelphia, Saturday, Feb. 26, 1820.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

(Concluded from our last.)

As T. also objects to our exposition of the resurrection, we will speak more at large on the subject, requesting our readers to examine the quotations—see John v. 25, &c.—Here we have presented a resurrection of those who have *done good*, and vice versa; yet this cannot be a Calvinistic rising,

for according to that creed, "We cannot by our *best works* merit freedom from sin, or eternal life," and "works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which *God commands*," "are sinful and cannot please God." Bap. Conf. p. 35. Indeed if eternal life depended on *good works*, the self-styled elect might tremble, lest publicans and sinners might go in before them, and the number be not "so certain and definite, that it cannot be increased or diminished." A serious reflection will show that eternal life does not depend on the works of men, it is too valuable to be the subject of chance and caprice. The ideal devil would by his cunning deprive them of this treasure, and, peradventure, in the form of an angel of light, he would allure by his borrowed majesty, and attract the steps of countless millions to his regal palace! Neither can it depend on man's belief: if so, myriads of infidels who have paid the debt of nature, would be doomed to interminable woe, and the pitiful remnant of vital Christians would only remain to grace the courts of that Being who has made of one blood all the nations of the earth—*Eternal life is the gift of God*. And for a gift we never pay. The resurrection then alluded to in John v. cannot be that of *eternal life*. It may be asked, then, what is it? We read of a death and resurrection which man may experience in his natural life, "To be carnally minded is death." Rom. viii. 6. We are told of those who have "*passed* from death unto life," whilst they yet had not tasted of natural death. The prophet Daniel prophesied that "many that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt;" and to designate the period when this should be, we read "from that time the daily sacrifice shall be taken away:" this time is the one referred to in John, "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is *passed* from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live, for as the Father has life in himself so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man: marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." John v. 24—30. These sufficiently point out a period in time which has passed. T. agrees with us in the 25th verse, but why he thinks the 28th refers to a different subject we cannot conceive.

We did not intend the passage which T. objects to (p. 101.) as a quotation, and it was not so marked, but that it conveyed the sense of scripture we refer to Matt. xxii. 30. and Mark xii. 25.

The warning T. has so solemnly held up, falls lightly at our feet, it is much the same that was uttered when we dared to believe in a God "good unto all," in opposition to the fashionable tenet of the day: yet we do not believe from the writings of T. that his warning will be accompanied with such acrimony as is generally associated with the warnings of limitarians.

T. advises us to view the scriptures as one whole; we do, and believe that a whole is made up of its parts. It is impossible for us to know the structure of a watch, unless we study its separate works; and in the frame of nature, without observing this rule, what could man learn? He could not at one glance view the unbounded scheme of things; he must study each part and thus know the whole. As to systems of Universalism they do not touch us; we bow to no pope, we view no infallibility but God; and equally reject creeds and creed makers. Truth is our object, and we hope that what the world calls splendour, shall not allure us from the path, nor the terrors of priestcraft drive us from the search; but it is our earnest desire that in worshipping God agreeably to the dictates of our own conscience, we may never use any carnal weapon; but only reason with our brethren who may differ from us. For all the good advice which we may receive, and for all the errors of ours which may be detected, we shall ever feel grateful, and shall endeavour to profit thereby; but until we are convinced of error, however we may be molested, none shall make us afraid.

POETS' CORNER.

FROM THE UNIVERSALIST MAGAZINE.

God the author of all things.

Who made the sun to rule the day,
And moon to guide the night?
'Twas God, the Father of the world;
Sole author of the light.

Who made the spring to bloom so gay,
And does the summer call?
'Tis God, who guards us ev'ry day
With equal love to all.

Who gave us minds to seek the truth,
His word to understand?
Who spread the gospel o'er the earth?
'Twas done by God's command

Who watches o'er us while we sleep,
And ev'ry want supplies?
'Tis God, who will his children keep,
Whose goodness never dies.

Who gives us liberty and peace,
And who will sinners save?
'Tis God whose goodness ne'er will cease,
When seas forget to wave. M

—O—

An Acrostic

Christ the Saviour of mankind,
Heals the broken heart and mind,
Renders ev'ry blessing dear,
Is, when call'd, forever near;
Sinners are through him forgiven,
Tak'n from earth they soar to heav'n.

Through the space of thirty years,
He took on him life's ills and cares,
Endow'd with grace, knew not its fears.

Such was Christ, he died for all,
Arose from death—they heard his call,
Virtue gladden'd—vice dismay'd,
Ills forgiv'n—death was stay'd;
Oh! rejoice, mankind is free,
Under Christ we glad shall be,
Reaching skies we him shall see.

An Epitaph on a Mother and her infant child.

To yon bright hills of blissful light,
Our spirits joyful took their flight;
Our bodies, left, are buried here,
To welcome home our kindred dear.

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Street, Philadelphia, on Sunday Evening,
February 13th, 1820—after which a col-
lection was taken up for the benefit of
the sufferers.

BY THE

REV. ABNER KNEELAND.

PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

Z.